

# NACCHO Exchange

Promoting Effective Local Public Health Practice

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Chronic Disease

## MAPP and STEPS to a Walk-able Nashville

By Judy Dias, Coordinator, Healthy Nashville 2010

*Invitation: Visit Nashville, wear your pedometer, enjoy walking about and add your steps to Healthy Nashville STEPS. You can take the sidewalked 4000 steps "CityWalk" and trace the stories of Nashville's past from frontier settlement to Music City USA.*

Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell established "Healthy Nashville 2010" on December 31, 2002. Healthy Nashville 2010 seeks to improve health status and quality of life for those who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Tennessee's capital city.

Mayor Purcell established the Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council to provide oversight and guidance to all activities. Healthy Nashville 2010 uses a strategic planning model developed by the National Association for County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Nashville was one of nine nationwide demonstration sites that implemented the strategic planning model called Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, or MAPP.

During 2003, Healthy Nashville 2010 conducted a series of assessments looking at data and statistics, health systems, community perceptions, and potential threats to health. The Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council determined the priority issues Nashville must begin to address in 2004 and beyond included obesity, overweight, and physical activity. The second strategic issue involved disparities in diseases and deaths,

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## Media Literacy and Empowered Young People: A Recipe for Strengthening Public Health Policy

By Dorothy Bradshaw, MS, MA, Tobacco Prevention Specialist, and Joan Miles, JD, MS, Health Officer, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department, Helena, Montana

Reducing the rates of tobacco use and initiation among high school students was foremost on our minds when we began thinking about new ways to use media literacy education in the classroom. The Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department has long been interested in increasing collaboration with area schools, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends media literacy education as part of schools' tobacco prevention policies. The timing was perfect to use media literacy as a way to offer students tobacco prevention education and to encourage youth involvement in the development of tobacco control policies.

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## MAPP and STEPS to a Walk-able Nashville

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particularly those impacted by obesity and physical activity, such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

One out of every five adult Nashvillians is considered obese and more than half are overweight.

As a first effort to address obesity and physical activity, the Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council developed a Healthy Nashville STEPS program. The goals of Healthy Nashville STEPS are:

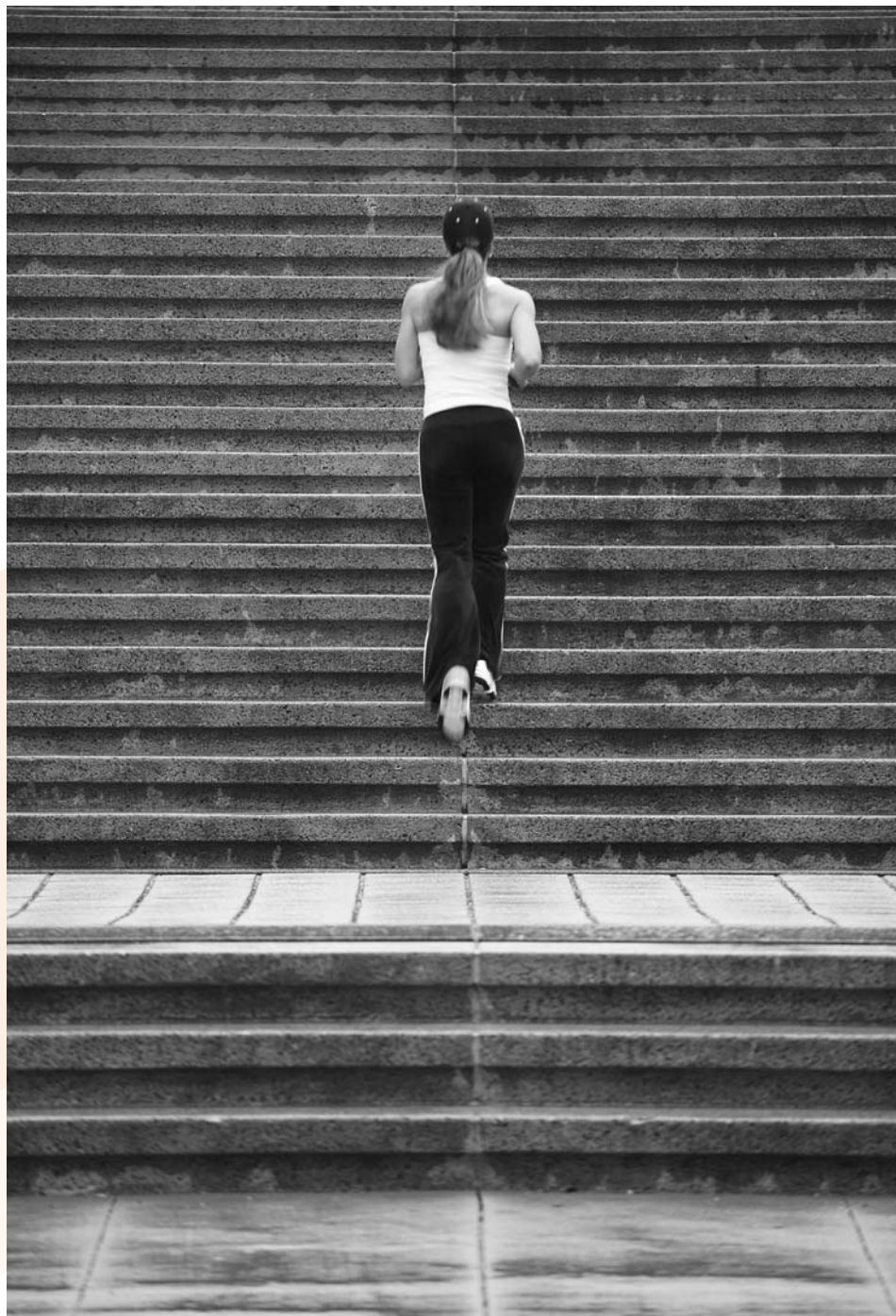
- 1) To increase the number of steps taken on a daily basis, and
- 2) To decrease intake by one hundred calories each day until healthy weights and levels of physical activity are achieved and maintained.

Healthy Nashville STEPS has five modules: Work STEPS, School STEPS, Play STEPS, Worship STEPS, and Neighborhood STEPS. Healthy Nashville STEPS has been selected as a model practice by the U. S. Conference of Mayors.

Though an affiliation with “Tennessee on the Move,” Healthy Nashville STEPS participants can use the Web site, [www.tennesseeonthemove.org](http://www.tennesseeonthemove.org), to track steps and receive helpful tips on moving more and eating less. Tennessee on the Move enrolls individuals and groups and tracks activity levels.

Healthy Nashville 2010 encourages walking, or taking more steps, because it is a form of exercise that can occur in a variety of settings. The Leadership Council feels it is important to be able to access convenient places for walking. In Nashville greenways and sidewalks represent important components of the walking infrastructure. Both are continuing to grow and expand as a result of leadership, budgetary, and community commitment.

A recent NACCHO Fact Sheet reports, “Community design often presents barriers to physical activity, contributing to increased risk for obesity, heart



disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases. Barriers include, but are not limited to, the absence of sidewalks, heavy traffic, and high levels of crime.”

Members of the Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council take a special interest in ensuring that Nashville is a walk-able community. They did preliminary assessments of sidewalks in Nashville (using the MAPP models of assessment) and decided to review the sidewalks criterion more thoroughly.

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The Leadership Council reviewed the *Metro Strategic Sidewalks and Bikeways Plan*<sup>1</sup> with members of the Metro Department of Public Works and the Metro Planning Commission. They learned about the Sidewalks Priority Index used to determine the relative need for sidewalks in each planning area. There was concern about some of the indexing, specifically around public schools and the fact that distances did not fit with the national standards for exercise and physical activity.

In order to be a part of the two-year review process for refining the Strategic Sidewalks and Bikeways Plans, the Healthy Nashville 2010 Leadership Council is making the following recommendations to appropriate policy makers:

### Proposal

- 1) The focus should not be solely on sidewalks, but on removing barriers to walking.
- 2) The distances that are considered walk-able (currently 1/2 mile) should be extended to two miles. This distance, when walked moderately or briskly, would meet national exercise standards.
- 3) Walk-ability reviews should occur for every new road or sidewalk project.
- 4) As a priority, the walk-able distances around schools should be extended to a minimum of 1.5 miles since this is the distance required before school bus service is provided.
- 5) Work with the "Active Living by Design" (a national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)) local grantee to ensure collaborative efforts to make Nashville more walk-able.

### A Revised Strategic Sidewalks Plan


- A focus on walk-ability, on physical activity and exercise, and on removing barriers to walking will likely lead to a plan resulting in the following:
- A revised point system with more emphasis on sidewalks adjacent to heavily traveled roads rather than lightly traveled neighborhood streets.
- Extension of the 1/2 mile trip generator to two miles could necessitate the establishment of priority walking routes or sidewalking one side of the street.
- New interest on appropriately placed and marked crosswalks allowing heavily traveled roads to be crossed safely.
- Heavily traveled roads might receive lane markings that provide room for walking. In some cases this might require shoulder extensions.



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### Conclusions

Making Nashville more walk-able will lead to improvements in health and quality of life for those who live in our midst. The proposed recommendations for the Metro Strategic Sidewalks Plan will encourage walking as a form of exercise, for recreational purposes, and for health benefit—neighborhood walking, walking in parks and greenways, walking to restaurants. It should also lead to more utilitarian walking—walking to work, to school, and to run errands.

Healthy Nashville 2010 continues to use the MAPP model at each step of the process to make Nashville a healthier city. MAPP promotes community collaboration and working together. MAPP also encourages informed decision making and proactive policies and plans. MAPP is a useful tool for addressing multiple and overarching issues such as chronic disease prevention and effective community land use. 

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*For more information about NACCHO programs that have been developed to support other efforts mentioned in this article, contact Emma Green, Chronic Disease Prevention Program Manager, [egreen@naccho.org](mailto:egreen@naccho.org); Heidi Deutsch, MAPP Program Manager, [hdeutsch@naccho.org](mailto:hdeutsch@naccho.org); or Valerie Rogers, Land Use Planning/Community Design Program Manager, [vrogers@naccho.org](mailto:vrogers@naccho.org).*

<sup>1</sup>Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways, February 2003. Accessed online at [www.nashville.gov/mpc/sidewalks/sidewalk\\_home.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/mpc/sidewalks/sidewalk_home.htm) on July 26, 2005.